2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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their village life, and, as in most other Bantu societies, the common, and sometimes the essential way of fulfilling social obligations. Beer is the present of honour between kinsmen. It is carried to chiefs as tribute, used to reward labour, or given as an offering to spirits. Nowadays, it may be one of the few ways by which a woman, left deserted by her husband, can make money for clothes.[1] Men cultivate extra ground in order to have enough millet for brewing. Abundance of beer is the glory of a commoner's hospitality, or a chief's court. Without it tribal councils cannot be held, and marriage or initiation ceremonies do not take place. For all these reasons it is impossible to describe the physical effects of native beer-drinking without knowing the part it plays in the Bemba's whole social life. *Ubwalua* is served in big calabashes holding about 2 or 3 gallons, or in disused petrol tins. It consists of a thick brown sludge to which hot water is added constantly throughout the evening so that the brew gets gradually weaker and weaker.[2] It is drunk through a hollow reed two or three gulps at a time. It is a cloudy fluid, often full of gritty particles, with a clear sharp taste not unlike the bitter flavour of English beer. Most natives become positively lyrical as to its qualities. They say it makes them rejoice (*ukusansamuka*) and that it warms their hearts (*ukukafyo mutima*)—the ordinary phrase used for getting excited and also angry. Old councillors at the chief's court who have become used to a regular supply of beer, complain bitterly if they are deprived of it. They say that it is bad for them to eat 'cold food', i.e. ordinary meals, and that they need something to 'burn their stomachs just there' (with a hand laid on the spot), and in fact beer must be much easier to digest in old age than most other Bemba foods.

Beer is recognized as making a man more talkative, liable to quarrel, or indulge in illicit love-making, and men whose hearts get hot quickly, to repeat the native phrase, are avoided at beer-drinks, if possible, because they may involve their friends in legal liabilities. I have even heard of cases where Bemba refused to marry into families with a reputation for becoming excitable when drunk. But drunkenness itself is not despised. In fact the drunkard

[1] The sale of beer is illegal in this district, but it is practically impossible to prevent the trading of small quantities.

[2] In samples taken at the beginning and at the end of an evening respectively, Dr. Widdowson found that the alcohol content varied from 4·44 per cent. to 2·10 per cent. (I am indebted to Mr. Douglas Miller of the Education Department for dispatching these samples.)

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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The Cultural Setting

576 Bemba ideal behaviour is that of the *mwina umusumba* or man living at the court, as distinct from the *mwina impanga* or inhabitant of the bush; the country bumpkin.

577 A commoner is expected to be loyal to the death to his chief,
565 and to accept the fact that his rulers have the right to all his time and all his possessions. He must be silent and respectful. Members of the crocodile clan are expected to be arrogant and even ruthless, but they must be generous in feeding their adherents.

888 Extreme deference is paid to age. Each child knows his exact
561 position of seniority in a group of village children and is given precedence in games. Each group of men sitting in the village shelter does the same. A younger child is scolded for putting itself forward before its elders.

562 Bemba women share many of these ideals. They work for their
622 chief in his gardens and make the same abject obeisance to him. They have a lively interest in the ritual centred in the court. They play an important part in attracting followers and kinsmen to a village. A headman's following or 'crowd' (*bumba*) is attracted by means of beer, good entertainment and company, and these depend both on the successful organization of labour, which is largely a man's job, and on the wise and tactful distribution of food, and happy personal relations, which are mainly in the women's sphere.

562 Women, unlike men, are admired for industry and for resource
842 in finding food in the bush. They are honoured for bearing and
888 rearing many children and for courage in childbirth which is often, under Bemba conditions, a terrible ordeal. They are expected to be loyal to their own sex and to accept the domination of older women.

562 In the sphere of tribal life women have an important part to
644 play, or rather one that is thought to be important. As we saw,
622 two senior princesses have districts of their own; and junior princesses often act as village 'headmen'. In all these cases they wield political authority but are regarded as chiefs with feminine attributes, that is to say, with more gentleness and hospitality to the needy. They are not expected to be ruthless in discipline. They have male counsellors to advise and support them. Besides these real political functions the senior women have important ritual duties since, like their 'brothers', they are in charge of

Tabwa (Aitawa), Lungu, Bemba, and Aushi (including their off-shoots the Kawendi and Mukulo). In addition there are Bwile (Bwiri), Mambwe, Bisa, Ngumbo, Mukulu, Lala, Lamba, Lomotwa, Yeke (Nyamwezi) and Swahili elements. The presence of the Batembo pygmies, whom Maes and Boone(1) place just south of Lake Mweru on their tribal map of the region, is not confirmed by other authorities. The extent of tribal mixture is shown by the fact that the headmen of thirty-four villages in Kambwali's chiefdom belong to eleven different tribes. None of the tribes is indigenous to the valley.

The tribe, *mutundu* (pl. *mitundu*: the word is also used for a species of animal, bird or tree) or *mushyobo*, is not a descent group. Tribal allegiance, unlike clan affiliation, can be changed with residence. Though never in doubt about their clan, people may be uncertain as to their tribe. Inter-tribal differences in custom were never considerable. Neither physical type, form of settlement, nor language are now reliable indications of tribal origin. Certain characteristics are traditionally attributed to particular tribes: the Bemba are proverbially cruel, the Shila good fishermen and canoe-makers; the Tabwa are renowned as witches and for the beauty of their women,(2) the Lomotwa for their quarrelsomeness. In spite of territorial dispersion, members of a tribe consider themselves *lupwa lumo*, "of one stock". The chiefs of neighbouring tribes occasionally visit their former subjects established in Kazembe's country.

The Lunda possessed a special status and constituted a sort of nobility to which distinguished outsiders - non-Lunda chiefs and headmen - could be admitted by being invested with Lundahood (*ubulunda*).

DEMOGRAPHY

No estimates are available for the population in the valley on the western (Belgian Congo) side. On the eastern side in Northern Rhodesia it was estimated by Coxhead at 32,000 in 1914.(3) He made no attempt, however, to distinguish between the various tribal groups, referring to all the subjects of the Kazembe as "the Lunda". According to more recent estimates the eastern population approaches 50,000 and shows signs of rapid expansion. It is now concentrated in some 300 villages strewn along the Luapula by the trunk road built on the hard land next to the riverside swamps. No figures are available to indicate variations in the density of population, which must be very high locally as many of the villages adjoin one another forming a continuous row of habitations along the side of the road.

Except for missionaries there are no resident Europeans in Kazembe's kingdom. On Nkuba's side a group of colonial officials and traders live at Kasenga.

Mobility has always been high and numbers have fluctuated widely as a result of migrations due to wars and to the popularity of individual chiefs.(4) A large proportion of the population is said to have left the country during the reign of Keleka, the fourth Kazembe, remembered for his atrocities.(5)

(1) Maes and Boone, 1935, p.135.
(2) Livingstone, 1874, I, p.289.
(3) Coxhead, 1914, p.64.
(4) Livingstone, op.cit., p.254.
(5) Livingstone, op.cit., p.265.

Section 5.—OTHER ROYAL CHIEFS.

565 622 The sons of the sisters of royal chiefs are, of course, all royal—*benang'andu*—themselves. And scattered throughout Bemba area are several chieftainships held by men of royal blood but who are only vaguely connected with the present reigning families. These are Chimbola, Mfungo, Nkweto and Mwaba. In the past there were many more, all descended from young royal sisters but none of them, for various reasons discussed earlier, being allowed to enter into the main succession.

The succession in all lines is simple. Each is a self-contained family following a direct matrilineal line, the chief being succeeded normally by brothers or maternal nephews. It is necessary to say briefly how these families obtained their posts as abolition of minor chiefs is a Superior Native Authority policy, and their importance may decide their fate.

Chimbola.

613 622 I have already dealt at length with this chieftainship which is the relic of an earlier Paramount lineage. Some people thus refer to it as more senior than the present lineage. It is, of course, in point of age but its importance has lapsed. It is an ever-present example of how the different branches of the clan do sometimes successfully cast each other from the long possession of good posts. All that need be said of it now is that should any amalgamation of small chiefs take place in this area, Chimbola should be regarded as senior or more important than Chisangaponde, Mfungo, Fwangila or Changala.

Mfungo.

This line is of an unimportant scion of the Chimbola branch. It comprises a separate little line of its own with a mother of very vague descent but who is distinct from the more senior mother of Chimbola although both date from the old lineage. Although the appointment was in the hands of Chitimukulu he always kept the post to its own little line. The present Mfungo is grandson to the last one. The post has already been reduced to that of a village headman. There has been trouble recently between Mfungo and Chisangaponde because the latter has retained his chieftainship and Mfungo, of the royal family, has not. Mfungo's area was absorbed by Chisangaponde. Mfungo's people have assaulted Chisangaponde's Kapasu on several occasions and perhaps Mfungo's area should have been absorbed in that of another royal chief and not in Chisangaponde's. The disputes have been going on now for several years and perhaps will only stop when Mfungo is put under another royal chief.

Nkweto.

This chief is also a *mwinang'andu* and is descended from a royal chief's sister. The first Nkweto was son of Mumbi, a young sister of Chitimukulu Katongo we Chinga, a Paramount of the old lineage. Her descendants were too far away to the right of the genealogical table to succeed to any of the main chieftainships, and they have therefore kept the line to themselves, following a true matrilineal descent. Nkweto's are succeeded by their brothers or nephews. Nkweto could be abolished as a chieftainship but geographical conditions may demand his retention.

Section 6.—SONS OF ROYAL CHIEFS.

565 622 624 I have dealt with the most senior son—Makasa, and how the line of all the sons of chiefs leads up to this one chieftainship. But not all sons get chieftainships as there are not enough posts to go round, so favouritism as well as ability are factors in these appointments.* It does not matter whether a son is born of the head wife or of any other wife. There seems to be a vague system of training sons and discovering the more efficient ones. As the sons grow up into youths they are given sections of the chief's village (*fitente*) to look after. Then as they pass to manhood the better ones are made village headmen. So when a chief's appointment comes vacant there is some indication of the abilities of the sons.

557 622 I give a table of sons holding posts.[1] This shows their seniority, but not their status which in most cases cannot be assessed. As the table shows, not all sons hold posts and it is not always the older sons who get them. They may be passed over in favour of younger sons, and once passed over it is unlikely that they will get a post in the future. Names, as usual, mean nothing. A son takes the seniority of his father, but as I tell now, such seniority may get him nowhere, for the following tendencies and facts affect the succession of sons of chiefs :

(*a*) In addition to Chitimukulu and Mwamba only Nkula and Makasa seem to have had the power to creat chieftainships for their sons and to appoint successors.

(*b*) There was and still is a tendency for the reigning chiefs to push their own sons at the expense of the sons of dead chiefs although the latter are most probably senior. This tendency perhaps Government should support as it leads to the appointment of younger men.

(*c*) In the past, the sons of Chitimukulu were given the eastern chieftainships—Chisangaponde, Mukwikile, Mubanga and Makasa. The sons of Mwamba went to the west—Mporokoso, Sunkutu, Lwali, Chipalo, Tungati, Muchereka, Munkonge, Misengo, Kasonka, Luchembe, Lukaka. The sons of Nkula kept to the east of Chambeshi.

I want now to discuss these three tendencies in detail.

(*a*) Appointment of Sons.

I have discussed in Section 2 the powers of Nkula in connection with the appointment of his sons. The most recent evidence of them is in the appointment of his son as regent to Lukaka. The first Lukaka was allied to the old defunct Shimumbi line for he was a son of Shilukamba Chikwanda the founder of that temporary branch of chieftainship. The second Lukaka was son of Chitimukulu Chikwanda C6 and this son is alive to-day. He is very old and the appointment of a son of the present Nkula D14 as regent is quite valid. The Lukaka is in the area of Nkula's influence and is not

* [cal. 116, pp. [52-53]. —Awnlyt]

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the Zulu, Swazi and other tribes with the regiment system. The *icalo* is also a ritual unit. At each capital are the sacred relics (*babenye*) of the first holders of the chiefly title and their ancestral spirits are thought to act as tutelary deities of the district, and are worshipped at the *umusumba*, at village shrines, and old hut sites throughout the country, and are also commonly supposed to act as guardian spirits to children born within the *icalo*.[1] Naturally the ritual and political organization of the paramount's capital is more elaborate than that of his inferiors, but even the smallest sub-chief maintains his miniature court and tries to ape the state of those above him, while the bigger territorial chiefs sometimes rivalled the power of the Citimukulu in the old days.

The territorial chieftainships are arranged in order of precedence, according to their nearness to the centre of the country—Lubemba—and the antiquity of their office. To the most important of these chiefdoms—the Mwambaship, the Nkulaship, the Nkolemfumuship, and the Mpepoship, for instances—the Citimukulu appoints his nearest relatives, the one succeeding the other in order of seniority. Thus the present Citimukulu, Kanyanta, has acted in turn as the Nkolemfumu, and the Mwamba before succeeding to the paramountcy (cf. chart on p. 102). On the other hand, the sub-chieftainships have tended to become concentrated in local branches of the royal family, and the paramount's strong grip over the country and his intimate knowledge of affairs at the courts of his fellow chiefs is certainly weaker in these outlying districts than in the case of chiefdoms ruled by his close relatives.

To the commoner, membership of an *icalo* means his allegiance to the chief of that territory. He will describe himself as an inhabitant of a district, such as *Icinga*, i.e. *mwine Icinga* or, alternatively, as the subject of its chief, Nkula, i.e. *mwine Nkula*, and both terms are synonymous. He may move from village to village within the *icalo*, but he remains his chief's man. The latter, in his turn, reckons his assets, not in terms of the size of his territory or its natural resources, but rather by the number of his people and in particular the villages he has under his rule.

(3) *Rank*. Rank is a marked feature of Bemba society. It is based on kinship, real or fictitious, with the chief. All members of the royal crocodile clan (*Bena ngandu*) are entitled to special respect, precedence on ritual and social occasions, and sometimes

[1] Hence the great preponderance of one or two birth-names in each district.

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to claims on the people's services. The potential heirs of a chief within his own branch of the family—that is to say, his brothers, maternal nephews, or maternal grandsons—are treated with particular deference. The former two categories are described as chiefs and addressed by the title *mfumu*, while the latter, only slightly lower in status, are referred to by a special name *beshikulu ba mfumu* ('grandchildren of the chiefs') and have their own ritual and social prerogatives.

Women of the royal line, the mothers, sisters, maternal nieces, and granddaughters of the chiefs are called *banamfumu* and are treated with much the same deference as are the men of the family. The mother of the paramount is highly honoured, succeeds to a fixed title—the *Candamukulu*—takes part in tribal councils, and has several villages of her own. The sisters of chiefs are privileged persons, protected and supported by their royal brothers, and usually granted one or more villages to rule. They are above the law in matters of sex morality, and a princess is allowed to have as many lovers as she pleases, provided she produces many children as potential heirs to the throne.

Not only members of the royal clan, but also persons who merely belong to the *uluptwa* of the chief, can claim high rank, i.e. his relatives on his paternal side, and his own sons. Some fathers of chiefs were nobodies and were quickly forgotten, but some have been famous men, honoured by their sons when the latter succeeded to the throne. The children of chiefs, though not members of his clan, and therefore not heirs, are also entitled to special privileges, and the *bana bamfumu* ('children of the chief') form a class of their own. They are brought up at the court, where they are treated in many ways more favourably than the heirs themselves and are able to claim headmanships and even chieftainships.[1] Even the half-brothers of chiefs, through other fathers (*bakaulu*), have rights to special treatment at court.

Added to this, already numerous class of royal personages are the descendants of close relatives of dead chiefs. Roughly speaking, any person who can claim to be maternal nephew, grandson, or son of a chief is succeeded by a man who continues to hold the same rank by the *ukupyanika* system described on p. 98. He is then addressed as 'chief' or 'son of chief'. The descendants of

[1] A few chieftainships are definitely handed on to 'sons of chiefs' instead of to 'chiefs', e.g. the Makasasship, the Lucembeship, or the Munkongeship.

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554 565 royal princesses are also entitled to honour, as well as those of wives of chiefs and even consorts of princesses. It will be seen, therefore, that the royal rank is a very large one. Any one who can possibly claim connexion of any sort with any chief, dead or living, does so, although the perquisites of rank are in most cases honour only and the possible favours of the chief, rather than any material assets. Every one outside the royal clan, or *ulupwa*, is an *umupabi*, or 'ordinary person', and in old days there was a slave class below—men and women captured in battle or enslaved to their own people for some crime. These individuals were known [578 567] as *bashya*. The term is now used as an opprobrious epithet especially for foreigners—often assumed to have been enslaved by the Bemba formerly. Slavery itself no longer exists.

561 (4) *Other Principles of Social Grouping*. Age is not a principle of social grouping among the Bemba. Precedence is reckoned on the basis of seniority, as in most Bantu societies, and there are special terms used to describe the different stages of life, suckling, infant, child, adolescent, unmarried, married, old, &c. But there [88] are no regiments based on age, as in South and parts of East Africa, and the boys initiation ceremonies so often found associated with such institutions do not exist among this group of the Central Bantu.

571 There are no occupational groups, with the exception of certain specialist fishing communities on the banks of the big rivers, and in the old days there were specialist hunters of big game. Secret societies, such as the *ubutwa*, which is common among neighbouring tribes over the Congo border, and has been adopted by the Bisa of the swamps, do not seem to have been introduced among the Bemba.

105 To conclude, Bemba society is as yet undifferentiated to any large extent. The tribe is an outgrowth of a lineage-group which has occupied its present territory for 200 to 300 years, and has remained more or less homogeneous. The original kinship structure is still apparent. All the social groups to which a man belongs are ultimately based on kinship—whether it is his household village or descent group, and there are no other forms of association such as age-sets to cut across this original grouping by descent. Rank consists of membership of the clan of the first immigrants to enter the land.

(*c*) *Economic Background*. The Bemba are an agricultural people

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(c) Economic Background. The Bemba are an Agri-

cultural people like most of the Central Bantu group to which they belong. They keep no cattle. Tsetse-fly at present prevents their keeping stock over most of the country, but in any case they seem to have no pastoral traditions, whatever they may have had formerly. Thus they have no means of storing wealth as have the Southern Bantu. Their marriage contracts are fulfilled by service and not by the passage of cattle. In the old days military glory and the extraction of tribute from conquered peoples seems to have been the dominant ambition of the Bemba chiefs, and their wealth consisted in the size of their following and the amount of service they were able to command. This fact profoundly influences their position at the present day (cf. p. 116).

The soil of most of this district is poor and it has not attracted white settlement. The staple crop is finger millet (*eleusine corecana*), while some kafir corn, a little maize, legumes, and pumpkins are also grown. The people practise shifting cultivation of a primitive type, and the plentiful supply of land and the lack of any localized natural resources which might attract the inhabitants to settle in one area rather than another all affect the political system. As has been shown, they decrease the strength of local ties as against political or kinship affiliations, and they account for the fact that the power to distribute land is not an important prerogative of leadership in distinction to conditions in most Southern Bantu tribes.

Hunting and fishing contribute a small share of the food-supply only. Organized marketing does not exist, and under modern conditions no cash crop has been found for this area. This fact, together with the absence of opportunities for local employment, forces the adult male population to look for work outside the tribal area, with resultant effects, as will be seen, on the political system of the tribe.

(*d*) *White Administration*. The type of white administration introduced in this area is described on pp. 112–20.

III. Bases of Authority

The positions of leadership in Bemba society consist of the following offices: (*a*) *territorial rulers* (chiefs and headmen); (*b*) *administrative officers and councillors*; (*c*) *priests, guardians of sacred shrines, and magic specialists with economic functions*; (*d*) *army leaders* in the old days. Succession to all these offices is

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based on descent in nearly every case. Chieftainships were limited to one clan, as we have seen; some of the councillorships (i.e. the *bakabilo*) are confined to a few of the older clans; and headmanships, though they may be won through the chiefs favour, tend to become hereditary in their turn. All priestly offices are hereditary without exception, as is natural where an ancestral cult of this type is practised. Magico-economic specialists, particularly those in charge of fishing villages, usually acquire their powers by descent also, as do some of the doctors and diviners (*yanga*). In each case the supernatural powers almost invariably correlated with political authority in this area are conferred by a rite, of great complexity, in the case of the succession of a chief, known as *ukupyanika*. For these reasons it is essential to study the dogma of descent by which these powers are believed to be transferred from one generation to another, and the legal rules of succession by which status and office are passed from one man to another.

(*a*) *The Dogma of Descent*. By dogma of descent I mean, first, those theories of procreation[1] which express a people's beliefs as to the physical contribution of the father and mother to the formation of the child, and hence the traditional conception of the physical continuity between one generation and the next; and next their beliefs as to the influence of the dead members of each social group over the living, and hence the social identification[2] of a man with the line of his dead ancestors.

Among the Bemba it is believed that a child is made from the blood of a woman which she is able to transmit to her male and female children. A man can possess this blood in his veins, but cannot pass it on to his children, who belong to a different clan. Physiological paternity is recognized. Children are often described as being like their fathers, and are expected to give the latter affection and respect although they have no legal obligations to them under the matrilineal system. 'We take our fathers' presents because they begot us,' they say. But it is nevertheless the physical

[1] This term was first introduced by Malinowski, who showed how the rules of matrilineal descent among the Trobriand islanders are buttressed by beliefs that the father makes no physical contribution to the birth of his child. Similar material published by Rattray from the Ashanti area shows a belief in a double contribution of blood from the mother and spirit from the father correlated with a bilateral emphasis on descent.

[2] To use a term employed in a very stimulating manner by Radcliffe Browne.